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Easing trade deficit bodes well for Egyptian pound

Local economy can withstand shocks thanks to diversification

Ahmed Kamel



EGYPT'S trade deficit fell by 4.1 per cent to $5.784 billion in the first two months of 2024, compared to $6.03 billion on the January-February period in 2023, data from the state-run Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS) showed yesterday.

Egypt's non-oil exports rose by 8.5 per cent to $6.067 billion on the January-February period in 2024, up from $5.591 billion on the same period last year.

Imports fell by 6.9 per cent to $12.69 billion on the January-February period, against $13.648 billion during the first two months of 2023. Exports declined by 9.2 per cent to $6.91 billion on the January-February period, compared to $7.61 billion during the same two months last year, according to CAPMAS data.

It is imperative to narrow the country's trade balance deficit as lower deficits in the trade account and trade balance can help the economy in several ways. A lower deficit can lead to an increase in demand for the Egyptian pound, which can strengthen its value relative to other currencies.

From a macroeconomic perspective, a decline in the trade balance can benefit the economy, leading to higher GDP growth. An easing trade deficit will likely slash demand for hard currency and reinvigorate the local pound.

Capital and financial account improves

Egypt's capital and financial account posted a net inflow of $ 8.4 billion in the first half (H1) of fiscal year 2023/24, up from $2.8 billion on the same period a year earlier, according to data from the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE).

The North African country netted foreign direct investment (FDI) worth $5.5 billion in H1 of fiscal year 2023/24, against $5.7 billion on the same period in fiscal year 2022/23. Egypt's fiscal year begins on July 1.

The capital and financial account inflows included $5.5 billion in FDI, and portfolio investment in Egypt posted a net inflow of $252.8 million in H1 of fiscal year 2023/24, according to CBE data.

Withstanding shocks

Egypt's economy can withstand shocks in the long run thanks to its diversified sectors. Egypt has been subject to several shocks since 2022, negatively impacting inflation. The Russia-Ukraine conflict, coupled with the tightening of global financial conditions have resulted in capital outflows from emerging markets in general including Egypt.

"Successive exchange rate depreciations were triggered by the pullout of portfolio investors, global uncertainty and higher import bills have all contributed to Egypt's growing foreign currency needs and pressured its foreign currency resources," the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in its report on Egypt's economy last week.

News briefs

Oil prices post steepest weekly drop in 3 months

OIL prices edged up yesterday on the prospect of OPEC+ continuing output cuts, but the crude benchmarks were headed for the steepest weekly losses in three months on demand uncertainty and easing tensions in the Middle East reducing supply risks.

Brent crude futures for July rose 14 cents to $83.82 a barrel. US West Texas Intermediate crude for June was up 16 cents, or 0.2%, to $79.11 per barrel, according to **Reuters**.

Still, both benchmarks were on track for weekly losses as investors worried about the prospect of higher-for-longer interest rates curbing growth in the US, the top global oil consumer, and in other parts of the world.

Brent headed for a 6.3% weekly decline, while WTI moved towards a loss of 5.6% on the week.

The drop comes just weeks ahead of the next meeting of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies led by Russia, together called OPEC+.

ECB may cut rates 3 times in 2024

THE European Central Bank (ECB) is "most likely" to cut interest rates just three times this year as stronger-than-expected economic growth supports inflation, ECB policymaker Yannis Stournaras said in an interview with a Greek media outlet.

The ECB has all but promised to start lowering borrowing costs from their current, record highs in June but the path further ahead has become more uncertain in recent weeks.

Stournaras, a policy dove who was among the first to call for a rate cut in June, said an economic rebound in the first quarter of the year made three cuts more likely than four.

"Based on these data, we now consider the three interest rate cuts in 2024 as the most likely scenario," the Greek central bank governor said.

Yen extends gains to cap wild week

ASIAN stocks surged to their highest in 15 months yesterday led by tech and Hong Kong stocks, while the yen put more distance from recent 34-year lows to cap a tumultuous week that saw suspected intervention from Japanese authorities.

With markets in Japan and mainland China closed yesterday, regional trading activity is likely to be subdued, according to **Reuters**.

The spotlight for much of this week has been on the yen , which strengthened 0.43% to 152.99 per dollar yesterday, having started the week by touching a 34-year low of 160.245 on Monday.



Enjoying happy Easter

Gazette staff

COPTS will celebrate Easter tomorrow. In this photo, young girls holding palms outside a church in downtown Cairo. In Egypt, Easter is a time for Copts to come together with their families and communities to attend church services, participate in special rituals, and enjoy festive meals. The celebrations typically begin on Palm Sunday, which commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and continue through Holy Week leading up to Easter Sunday.

One of the most iconic traditions of Coptic Easter is the painting of eggs, especially on Sham el-Nassim Day (Monday), which is a public holiday in Egypt.

Sham el-Nassim is an Egyptian festive day dating back to ancient Egyptians thousands of years ago.

FSRU Hoegh Galleon to be deployed in Egypt by June

Gazette staff



NORWAY-based Höegh LNG has made an agreement with Australian Industrial Energy (AIE) and Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company (EGAS) for the deployment of the floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) Hoegh Galleon.

The aim of the deployment is to support energy security in Egypt, Höegh LNG said.

One of the key advantages of FSRUs is their mobility, which allows them to be easily deployed in different locations based on demand. This flexibility makes them an attractive option for countries looking to diversify their energy sources or meet seasonal fluctuations in demand for natural gas.

Hoegh Galleon will be located in Ain Sokhna in Red Sea for a likely period of 19-20 months, after which it is expected to be deployed to AIE's LNG terminal currently under construction at Port Kembla, Australia.

"Together with AIE and EGAS, we are pleased to provide Egypt with flexible infrastructure in support of energy security. Höegh LNG is the industry leader in the rapid deployment of FSRUs, and we are pleased that we can provide this solution for EGAS together with AIE while continuing to develop our strong partnership," said Erik Nyheim, President & CEO of Höegh LNG.

Höegh LNG and AIE announced a 15-year FSRU charter agreement for Hoegh Galleon in June 2022. The agreement with EGAS is for an interim period of June 2024 to February 2026.

How FSRUs help?

Floating Storage and Regasification Units (FSRUs) have revolutionised the way natural gas is transported and distributed around the world. These floating facilities are essentially floating terminals that can store and re-gasify liquefied natural gas (LNG) before it is transported via pipelines to end-users.

The process of regasification involves converting LNG back into its gaseous state so that it can be easily transported through pipelines for distribution. FSRUs play a crucial role in this process by providing a flexible and cost-effective solution for regasifying LNG in locations where building onshore terminals may not be feasible or economically viable.

Missile defence fuels urgency to acquire systems

LONDON (News Wires) – The success of ballistic missile defences facing their first complex, high-stakes combat scenarios in Israel, the Red Sea and Ukraine will encourage militaries globally to invest in the pricey systems, experts say – and intensify missile arms races.

Iran launched as many as 120 intermediate-range ballistic missiles at Israel on April 13, US and Israeli officials say. US SM-3 and Israeli Arrow interceptors destroyed nearly all of them, leaving drones and smaller threats to the Iron Dome system.

In previous months, interceptors fired from US Navy destroyers stopped Houthi anti-ship ballistic missiles, while in Ukraine, US-made MIM-104 Patriot batteries have shot down advanced Russian Iskander and Khinzal missiles.

Reuters spoke with six experts who said more militaries would look to invest in ballistic missile defence, a potential windfall for companies such as Lockheed Martin and Raytheon, which build those types of systems.

Saudi Arabia has used its Patriots for years to defend against Houthi attacks; it and the United Arab Emirates also operate the Lockheed Martin (LMT.N), opens new tab Terminal High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) system. Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain have Patriot batteries as well, and Oman has expressed interest in missile defence.



SERVICEMAN patrolling in front of the Patriot air defence system during Polish military training on the missile systems at the airport in Warsaw, Poland February 7, 2023.

In the US, Lockheed Martin in April won a $17.7 billion contract for a next-generation interceptor for the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense (GMD) programme – designed to shoot down small numbers of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) aimed at the continental United States.

But the impact may be most acute in Asia, where China has invested heavily in conventionally armed ballistic missiles. A 2023 Pentagon report said the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force has about 500 DF-26 missiles, designed to accurately strike targets thousands of kilometres away.

That puts US and allied bases in Japan and Guam within range of an attack that may only come with 20 to 30 minutes' warning.

"In the Pacific, you'll see further interest in missile defence, which will push the Chinese to build more systems," said Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in California. "Countries will want to acquire (offensive) missiles because they see other countries using them ... That will drive up demand for missile defences."

US Indo-Pacific Command and China's Ministry of Defence did not respond to requests for comment.

China rarely discusses its missile arsenal beyond statements that its forces are meant to preserve peace and are not aimed at any specific country.

Ballistic missile defence works by spotting an attacking weapon either at launch or in flight, then using a surface-based radar to guide an interceptor to the target.

Interceptions can occur in the atmosphere or in space, and each domain requires different hardware. For instance, fins won't work outside the atmosphere – interceptors must have small steering rockets to function there.

The necessary high-powered computers, far-seeing radars and missiles as large as telephone poles are not cheap, together stretching into the billions. In 2022, for example, the US approved the sale of both Patriots and THAAD systems to Saudi Arabia, in deals worth as much as $5.3 billion.

Gold dips on Fed high rates

NEW YORK (News Wires) – Gold prices were set to drop for a second straight week yesterday, as investors grasped the idea for rates to remain higher in the US until at least year-end.

Spot gold fell 0.2% to $2,299.53 per ounce, and has lost more than 1% this week. Prices have fallen more than $130 after hitting a record high of $2,431.29 in April.

US gold futures fell 0.1% to $2,308.20.

"What I see now is kind of a psychological retracement of gold. Moreover, the market is still digesting what Powell said a few days ago...but investors are still seeing correction as a chance for increasing their position for buying gold," Carlo Alberto De Casa, a market analyst at Kinesis Money, said.

The Fed on Wednesday indicated it is still leaning towards eventual reductions in borrowing costs, but put a red flag on recent disappointing inflation readings that could make those rate cuts a while in coming. Markets are pricing in a 73% chance of a rate cut in November, as per CME's FedWatch Tool.

Bullion is considered an inflation hedge, but elevated interest rates reduce the appeal of the non-yielding asset.

According to **Reuters** technical analyst Wang Tao, spot gold is biased to break resistance at $2,311 and climb to a range of $2,325-$2,351.

State seeking to improve workers' conditions, develop skills

Gov't considers workers as cornerstone of development

Gazette staff

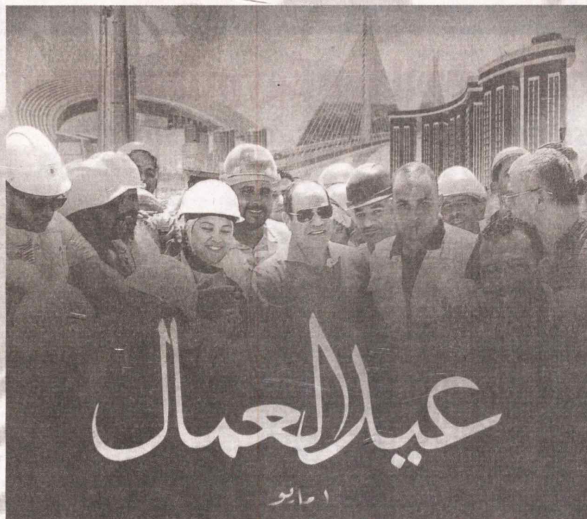
EGYPT celebrates the Labour Day on May 1 every year, the matter which reflects the State's interest in their workers and appreciation of their role in the society and in building the State. The celebration of Labour Day goes back to ancient times, when the ancient Egyptians sanctified work and realised its importance, the matter which was one of the most fundamental pillars that enabled them to build the oldest civilisation known to mankind.

In this regard, we recall the instructions issued by King Thutmose III, the sixth pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty, to his minister, which were written on the walls of his tomb in the western side of Luxor, thus guiding him to the good management of work, achievement of justice and quality of work.

The magnificent engineering design of the pyramids show the strenuous effort exerted in building these great edifices, which reflect dedication to work and sincerity in mastering it.

In modern Egypt, the celebration of Labour Day began in 1924, and then it became an official celebration under President Gamal Abdel Nasser. In 1964, May 1st became an official holiday in which the President of the Republic delivers a speech before trades union leaders.

After the July 1952 Revolution, many factories were established including the aluminium complex in Naga'a Hammadi. Egypt was determined to establish the largest industrial base in the Third World, where 1200 factories were established during the era of Abdel Nasser operating in the heavy, transformative and strategic industries.



At the present time and after the June 30 Revolution 2013, Egypt has continued its policies of economic freedom, adoption of the free market mechanisms, openness to foreign investments and support of the private sector while paying attention to the public sector, as it is one of the basic mechanisms in formations of the social structure for large sectors of the Egyptian labour force.

In this context, President Abdel Fattah El Sisi formed the Ministry of Public Business Sector in March 2016, where the public sector companies were affiliated to the Ministry of Investment, in order to revive the sector again not only for economic reasons, but also to achieve social justice and take care of various segments of society.

Since President Sisi assumed power in June 2014, the State has put among its priorities improving the conditions of the Egyptian workers, with a view to creating an appropriate environment for work and production.

The State has attached special importance to persons with special disabilities and irregular workers, where it worked to increase job opportunities suitable for them.

Meanwhile, President Sisi praised Egyptian workers for their dedication to building a modern nation, extending wishes for continued prosperity and well-being.

The president marked Labour Day by lauding the dedication and hard work of Egyptian workers, describing them as the cornerstone of Egypt's development efforts.

"You have exerted your utmost effort in advancing our modern state, and I extend my sincere gratitude to each and every one of you," the president said in a recent tweet on social media.

The president's message resonated with sentiments of unity and progress, as he wished for Egypt to continue flourishing and extended prayers for the health and well-being of all workers.

New industrial zones

The Egyptian government works on several pivots to support and protect workers such as launching initiatives and providing grants to protect workers, building industrial cities and factories and offering decent jobs for young people. The State also paid attention to issue the laws and decisions that serve workers and encourage the union action.

The government has established industrial zones including the Rubiki city for leather on an area of more than 500 feddans, Damietta Furniture City on an area of nearly 331 acres, and the Plastic Industries Complex on an area close to 500 acres, over two phases.

It also set up 5 industrial zones under the industrial developer system; 3 industrial zones in Sadat City and two zones in Tenth of Ramadan City with a total of 646 plots of land and a total area of 7.9 million square metres of industrial lands equipped with utilities, where their expected investments amounting to LE23 billion thus providing 37,000 job opportunities.

The gains of workers have doubled after implementation of the initiatives launched by President Sisi and establishment of mega projects that provide them with many jobs. The State is still exerting efforts to encourage workers and open horizons for them out of its belief in their great role in the comprehensive development of Egypt.

Laws serving workers

The State has issued many decisions and laws aiming at achieving interests of workers and ensuring their rights.

The laws issued by President Sisi to preserve the rights of workers included issuance of Law No. 142 of 2019 which amends several provisions of the Trade Union Law and the Protection of Freedom of Association promulgated by Law No. 213 of 2017, and the Presidential Decree No. 526 of 2019 on formation of a committee to amend the Business Sector Companies Law. President Sisi also issued directives to increase the salaries of all workers in the country and raise the minimum wage up to LE6000.

The State has worked around the clock to achieve the aspirations and dreams of workers including establishment of new communities such as the New Administrative Capital, which represents a great future for Egyptians. It provides a new environment for growth and progress, whose effects will be reflected on the workers financially, morally and culturally. The developing work tools and latest developments of the modern era make it obligatory for the Egyptian workers and craftsmen to continue non-stop learning and develop themselves in order to pursue rapid progress in various fields.

Nation making great strides to revive textiles industry

Hagar Saeed

EGYPT is planning to open what is said to be the world's largest spinning and weaving factory next month, according to local news reports.

Minister of the public Business Sector Mahmoud Esmat told local media that the factory is set to commence operations in the city of Mahalla al-Kubra next month with a daily production of 30 tonnes.

In 2019, the government launched a LE 23 billion plan to promote the textile industry, which includes improving the efficiency of state-owned spinning and weaving factories, under a contract with Werner International Management.

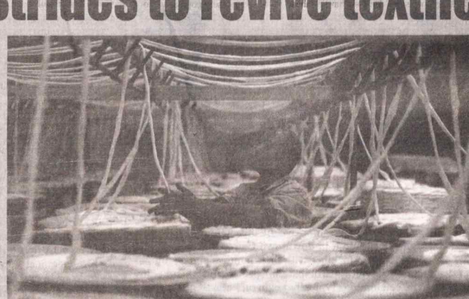
The plan, according to the minister of public business sector, aims to more than double the production capacity of its mills to reach an annual 4 million quintals of cotton, up from 1.5 million quintals currently. The ministry also plans to increase its ready-made clothing and knitwear production capacity from 8 million to 50 million pieces annually.

As part of the plan, the state has already merged nine of its cotton ginning and trading companies into a single entity, and merged 23 spinning, weaving, dyeing and processing companies into eight companies. Additionally, the state has signed contracts for new machinery and equipment with several major players based in Switzerland, Germany, Italy, France, and Japan, the minister said.

Four factories have been passed to an Indian company for complete rehabilitation. "The outcome has been improving the production capacity over four-fold for high-quality products," the minister added.

The textiles industry development plan also includes setting up a company under the name of the Egyptian Cotton Hub (ECH) to market the sector's production of yarns and garments. The ECH is managed by foreign marketing experts. It sells two made-in-Egypt textile brands, Nit, whose products have already been exported to Turkey, Denmark, Italy, and the US, and the cheaper brand Mahala, Esmat said.

Esmat said that his ministry is looking forward to offering a bundle of investment opportunities at its affiliated firms for partnership with the private sector within 2024.



EGYPT is set to open what is said to be the largest textiles factory next month.

Ahmed Mustafa, head of the state-owned Cotton and Textiles Industries Holding Company (CTIHC), said that a larger role for private-sector textiles companies with their financing and production capacities would increase the sector's contribution to GDP.

"Supporting marketing policies and production capacities is imperative as long as the state is keen on raising private-sector investments in the sector," Mustafa said.

The sector recorded some $ 2.2 billion in exports last year and the state aims to push that number to $ 8 billion in 2025, Mustafa said, adding that Egypt exports textiles to the US, Europe, the African Union, and a number of Arab countries.

"The government sees the textiles sector as one of the most important ways to get the Egyptian economy back on track and boost exports. The government is aiming to increase exports to $100 billion a year within the next five years and reduce dependency on imports," said Magdy Tolba, chairman of Cairo Cotton Centre and former head of the Export Council of Spinning and Textiles.

The sector has advanced over the past few years and is now able to keep pace with fashion trends, Tolba said.

However, the sector is struggling with rising material costs as 55 per cent of synthetic fibres are currently imported, he added.

"Textile production should rely on homegrown materials in order to increase the added value of products and increase export revenues," Tolba said.

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WHO acknowledges Egypt's health achievements

Egypt has received international credit for its exceptional achievements in its health welfare programme. During a ceremony held to mark its global week-long vaccination campaign, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared that the Egyptian government of Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouli deserved international recognition for its success to eradicate diseases and viruses through its 100 Million Health Programme, an unprecedented initiative launched in Egypt in July 2019 under the sponsorship of President Abdel Fatah El Sisi.

Awarding Egypt its Golden Certificate, Dr. Rana Hajjeh, Director of Programme Management at the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, highlighted the government's success in eradicating hepatitis C virus, a deadly disease, which had rampaged through the country for decades until President El Sisi intervened and announced the 100 Million Health.

Addressing a press conference held to mark Egypt's extraordinary success, Dr. Rana said: "Egypt is given credit for being the first hepatitis C-free country worldwide." She also acknowledged the government's fulfilled efforts to save Egyptian children from hepatitis B disease by vaccinating new-born babies 24 hours after birth.

Also, thanks to the 100 Million Health Programme, Dr. Rana said, epidemics and infectious diseases have disappeared in Egypt. The WHO official added: "Egyptian children have been rescued from polio, since 2000. She also acknowledged the government for its successful campaign against tetanus and measles.

It was in July 2019 when President El Sisi issued firm directives to the government to launch an initiative, which should help put an end to the people's dreadful sufferings from infectious and non-infectious diseases. The initiative developed to 100 Million Health aimed to early detect breast cancer, detect non-communicable diseases (diabetes, blood pressure, obesity). The initiative's priorities also include attention to women's reproductive health. About 38 million women have been examined since the launch of the initiative. Screening services for women were provided through 3,538 health units across the country, as well as 114 hospitals to provide medical services to women whose condition requires an advanced examination.

Achievements in health welfare programme are part of unprecedented renaissance era springing up across Egypt under the leadership of President El Sisi.

What we lose when languages die

Ross Perlin

THE world's 190-odd nation-states are home to 7,168 "living languages," according to the latest figure from Ethnologue, a widely used language database. The implications of this enormous disproportion are obvious, given that few governments support more than one or a handful of official languages. The vast majority of languages represent communities that are much older and more localised than nation-states, and the mismatch between states and languages is at least one driver of a planet-wide shift in human consciousness: the staggering loss of linguistic diversity. Linguists consider at least half of all human languages to be endangered.

Already most of these tongues have under 10,000 speakers, whereas hundreds have fewer than ten, and many are thought to have just one. (The situation is particularly dire for the world's 157 sign languages, as tallied by Ethnologue.) Speakers of Arabic, English, French, Hindi, Mandarin Chinese, and Spanish are legion, while lesser-known tongues dwindle away. According to one estimate, 96 per cent of the world's population speaks just four per cent of all languages, which means that the striking obverse is also true: just four per cent of the world's population speaks 96 per cent of all languages. Like biodiversity, linguistic diversity is not evenly distributed, remaining strongest in "hotspots" such as Papua New Guinea, equatorial Africa, the Amazon, and the Himalayas, all places where, at least until recently, topography, subsistence economies, and distance from centralised states have helped smaller language groups survive. The new language hotspots today are in cities that are migrant hubs such as Jakarta, Lagos, London, New York, and Paris, where peoples from all over increasingly cluster for work, education, access to services, a chance for survival, and a taste of modern life. Today's New York is the most linguistically diverse city not only in the world but in the history of the world, but the survival of linguistic diversity in such crucibles of contact is far from assured.



LINGUISTS consider at least half of all human languages to be endangered.

Languages have always come and gone—and sometimes even languages with very small numbers of speakers have survived for generations—but the current rate of loss is unprecedented. In many ways, it is parallel to the planet's accelerating loss of animal and plant species. Arguably, it started with the millennia-long, ongoing spread of agriculture, which enabled certain language groups to increase in number, take new territories, and dominate smaller-scale and more linguistically diverse hunter-gatherer and nomadic groups. In recent centuries, the conquests of colonial empires, hyper-urbanisation, the ever-expanding networks of capitalism, and the monolingual imperatives of nation-states have all driven the vanishing of languages. The spread of formal education systems and new forms of media and communications also make it harder for smaller languages to hang on in a changing world.

Speakers of dominant languages often shrug at the disappearance of these smaller languages. After all, they wonder, wouldn't the world be a better place if everybody understood one another? That kind of thinking not only forgets that speakers of the same language are perfectly capable of fighting and killing one another but also completely overlooks the scientific, artistic, and deeply human benefits of linguistic diversity.

In A Myriad of Tongues: How Languages Reveal Differences in How We Think, the anthropological linguist Caleb Everett dwells on the richness of the world's disappearing tongues. Far from being primitive dialects, endangered languages teem with oral literature, historical and scientific knowledge, unique linguistic features, and other wonders that can rarely be fully translated into other languages.

A growing body of research also shows that it is best for children to be educated in their mother tongue and that maintaining one's mother tongue can even be good for one's mental and physical health. Preserving languages can also be a matter of justice, given the history of displacement, persecution, and marginalisation of most speakers of endangered languages.

The demise of any language is not inevitable. With the political support of local or national governments and the devotion of sufficient economic resources, every language can handle all the threats, temptations, and communicative demands that come with both the homogenising of national identities and the pressures of globalisation. But most languages do not enjoy that kind of backing. Extraordinary economic, political, and social strains produce ruptures in intergenerational language transmission as young people cease to speak the way their elders do. Speakers of a language begin to feel out of place in the world; it is not just that access to jobs, schools, and other opportunities are tied to dominant languages such as English, Mandarin, and Spanish but also that speakers of tongues such as Cree, Nahuatl, and Zhuang have continually been made to feel ashamed of what and how they speak and, by extension, of who they are.

Such languages face an uphill battle to survive, never mind to flourish. It is precisely the endangered half of the world's languages about which the least is known, with few if any books or recordings to document most of them—sometimes little beyond a bare list of words. Only in the past few decades has there been a serious organised effort even among linguists (often a step behind missionaries) to document endangered languages and develop a set of practices, protocols, and tools for the purpose. At the same time, speakers of small and endangered languages are not sitting idly by.

Hundreds of communities around the world have started trying to reclaim or revitalise their languages—a new global movement with major political implications of its own.

Foreign Affairs

TikTok vows to fight its ban

Andrew R. Chow

TIKTOK'S fate hangs in the balance. President Biden has signed a bill into law that demands that the app's Chinese parent company ByteDance either sell TikTok, or face a nationwide ban.

But the bill's legislative success does not mean that TikTok is going away anytime soon. ByteDance now has at least nine months to sell the app. The new law will face legal challenges, antitrust hurdles and public backlash. And TikTok has vowed to fight back in the courts.

"Make no mistake, this is a ban... A ban on you and your voice," Shou Chew, TikTok's CEO, posted on TikTok on Wednesday. "Rest assured, we aren't going anywhere... The facts and the Constitution are on our side." Here's what lies ahead for the immensely popular video platform. For many months, members of the House of Representatives, and especially conservatives, have stumped against TikTok's spread in the US, arguing that it is a tool for Chinese propaganda and the surveillance of the 170 million Americans that use it. Their complaints intensified in the midst of the Israel-Hamas War, when politically-charged content about the war flooded the app.

In March, the House passed a bill giving ByteDance two choices: sell the app, or face a ban. But that bill's progress stagnated when it reached the Senate. Senators on both sides of the aisle urged caution and expressed doubt the bill would hold up to a legal challenge.

However, the House found another path forward this month: They attached a similar anti-TikTok bill to a US foreign policy package that includes aid for Ukraine and Israel. The measure in the package that included the ban, as well as penalties against Russia and Iran, passed 360 to 58.

Senators who have previously expressed skepticism about a TikTok bill, including Maria Cantwell, said that they would support this version. On Tuesday, the measure was approved in the Senate 79 to 18. The following day, President Biden signed it into law.

Many experts had said that completing a deal in six months would have been nigh impossible, and that a year is still ambitious. For comparison, AOL's $182 billion merger with Time Warner in 2000 took roughly a year to finalise, while Facebook's $19 billion acquisition of WhatsApp in 2014 took seven months to clear regulatory hurdles.

Further, finding a buyer for TikTok may be tricky. TikTok made $16 billion in sales in the US last year, and is expected to garner a massive price tag that only a handful of Big Tech companies can afford. Any large potential buyer will face intense scrutiny from the EU and the Biden administration, which have challenged acquisitions attempted by tech giants like Microsoft, Amazon, and Google, citing antitrust laws. Meanwhile, China has vowed to oppose a forced sale of the company.

TikTok has mobilised its rabid usership to try to turn public opinion against the bill. A MoveOn petition calling for President Biden not to ban the app has garnered over 30,000 signatures. The company has also indicated that it will wage an all-out legal war in preventing the law from being enacted. The company has had success in the courts before: In 2020, federal judges blocked an attempt by President Trump to ban TikTok or force its sale.

Michael Beckerman, TikTok's head of public policy for the Americas, wrote in an internal memo obtained by CNN that the company would "move to the courts for a legal challenge." He wrote: "This is the beginning, not the end of this long process."

TikTok will likely try to challenge the bill on constitutional grounds. A company spokesperson said the bill "would trample the free speech rights of 170 million Americans." This line of argument has received support from some civil rights organisations. A representative for the American Civil Liberties Union has called the bill "unconstitutional," and Nadine Farid Johnson, policy director of the Knight First Amendment Institute, wrote in a statement that the TikTok bill would "infringe" on "Americans' First Amendment right to access information, ideas, and media from abroad."

Bryan Cunningham, the executive director of UC Irvine's cybersecurity policy and research institute, says that TikTok could try to challenge the law under equal protection, to argue that it disadvantages foreign-owned companies. He also expects a vigorous free speech-based challenge. While some lawyers believe the ban will be struck



down by the courts, Cunningham is doubtful that either challenge will be successful. "It doesn't actually prohibit any speech," Cunningham says. "It would be like trying to argue that the FCC can't regulate who can buy and own TV stations because Americans have a right to CBS in Chicago. They don't. They have a right to free speech, but not to a particular platform."

Even if ByteDance refuses to sell TikTok, triggering the ban, the app would not disappear from the United States overnight. Having TikTok on one's phone would not become illegal. But the app would be taken off app stores and become ineligible for updating, making it buggier and less functional over time.

TikTok fans could use a VPN to pose as a user from abroad, or simply download the app in another country. But the barriers to entry and a declining user experience would mean TikTok would lose its edge in the market and likely fade slowly over time.

"It can't actually be fully banned," Cunningham says. "But the law will create a huge competitive advantage for any challenger."

Time

World is on fire – here are 4 economic ways to put it out

Lawrence H. Summers & N.K. Singh

THE world is facing its worst five-year span in three decades. Higher interest rates have left developing countries crushed by debt, and half of the poorest economies haven't recovered to where they were before the pandemic. Growth is weak across large swaths of the world, and inflation remains persistently high. Behind it all, the thermometre keeps inching up. Last year was the warmest on record, as is true of nearly every month.

For the past several years, world leaders have made big promises and laid out bold plans to mitigate the climate crisis and help poor countries adapt. They pledged that the World Bank would transform itself to work on climate change and that the multilateral system would get new money and lend more aggressively with the resources it has, including to meet concessional needs. An agreement between creditors would provide debt relief to countries that most needed it. And where public money was insufficient, the multilateral system would be able to catalyse private investment in developing countries.

Despite the bold rhetoric, 2023 was a disaster in terms of support for the developing world. As the chart below demonstrates, the private sector collected $68 billion more in interest and principal repayments than it lent to the developing world. Amazingly, international financial institutions and assistance agencies withdrew another $40 billion, and net concessional assistance from international financial institutions was only $2 billion, even as famine spread. "Billions to trillions," the catchphrase for the World Bank's plan to mobilise private-sector money for development, has become "millions in, billions out."

It is little wonder that World Bank shareholders have not raised capital, substantially changed financing practices or taken other bold steps. The International Monetary Fund is on net withdrawing funds from the developing world; the idea of comprehensive debt relief has gone nowhere; and financial defaults have been avoided only by the moral default of slashing health and education spending.



THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) headquarters building in Washington, US.

Setting aside the complex problem of climate change for a moment, world leaders haven't even been able to tackle the simplest, most straightforward challenges. War, inflation and poor governance have brought some of the poorest people — including in Chad, Haiti, Sudan and Gaza — to the brink of famine, yet the international response has been slow and muted. This is both a humanitarian disaster in its own right and a symbol of our broader inability to act in the face of a crisis.

If the world can't even get food to starving children, how can it come together to defeat climate change and reorient the global economy? And how can the poorest countries trust the international system not to leave them behind if that system can't address the most basic challenges?

Here are four big ideas as to what is necessary:

1. Reverse the capital flows, so that the lowest-income countries receive more support than they pay out to private creditors: In the short term, that means expanding the multilateral development banks' use of innovative financial tools such as guarantees, risk-mitigation instruments and hybrid capital. In the slightly longer term, it means stepping up with new money from shareholders — a capital increase for the World Bank and regional development banks, which will require legislative approval in shareholding countries.

2. Transform multilateral development banks (MDBs) into big, risk-taking, climate-focused institutions: Development banks have tinkered around the edges with bolder approaches to lending, but it is time for them to scale up those efforts. The wealthy countries that are the biggest shareholders in the multilateral system need to provide the political support for that risk-taking.

3. Fully fund the International Development Association: This highly effective institution provides much-needed resources to the lowest-income countries. The World Bank's president has called for the largest-ever IDA replenishment from donors; given the challenges ahead, the world cannot afford to deliver anything less.

4. Tackle food security: Last year, the United Nations was able to raise from international donors only about one-third of what it sought for humanitarian relief, and it had to slash its goals for 2024. Stepping up with funding for the several hundred million people without enough food to eat would alleviate a humanitarian disaster and provide evidence to skeptical countries that the international system still can work.

Half the world goes to the polls this year, from the United States and the United Kingdom to India and Mexico. Pervasive distrust of governments and their promises is a ubiquitous issue, and we see every day that the idea of an international community is becoming an oxymoron. The conventional wisdom is that foreign policy falls by the wayside as politicians turn their focus to campaigning and to domestic issues that will win them votes.

We dare to hope that historians will look back at this week's meetings as a moment when global leaders seriously addressed global challenges. The problem is not primarily intellectual. Blueprints like that of the G20 expert group we chaired on strengthening the MDB system abound. It is a problem of finding the political will to take on the most fundamental issues facing humanity.

MarketWatch

The Egyptian Gazette
The Middle East's oldest English-language daily
Established in 1880
Published by Al-Tahrir Press House

Sabalenka to face Swiatek in Madrid final

MADRID (News Wires) — Defending Madrid Open champion Aryna Sabalenka produced a brilliant comeback from a set and a break down to beat Elena Rybakina and reach the final.

The Belarusian second seed triumphed 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/5) and will face world number one Iga Swiatek on Saturday in a rematch of last year's final.

Sabalenka, 25, sealed her victory with a typically powerful serve that Rybakina could not control.

The big-hitter had lost three of her last four clashes against the 24-year-old but emerged triumphant as they met on clay for the first time.

"I don't know how, but somehow I was able to stay alive in the second set," said Sabalenka, aiming for a third Madrid Open title in her third final.

Swiatek of Poland cruised to a straight-set win over Madison Keys to reach the Madrid Open final for the second consecutive year.

World No.1 Swiatek beat 20th-ranked Keys 6-1, 6-3 in the semi-finals. "It was a pretty clean performance and really solid game from myself," Swiatek said according to **AP**. "I´m happy with everything."

The Madrid Open is the only high-profile European clay-court competition that Swiatek has yet to win.

It will be the third final of the year for Swiatek after titles in Indian Wells and Doha.

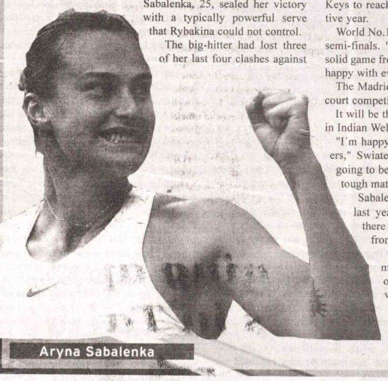
"I´m happy that we can play a final against the top players," Swiatek said. "It shows consistency. For sure it´s going to be a challenge, whoever it´s going to be, and a tough match. I will be ready. I will focus on myself."

Sabalenka defeated Swiatek in the Madrid final last year. Keys said she was disappointed but there were "a lot of really great things to take from the tournament" in the Spanish capital.

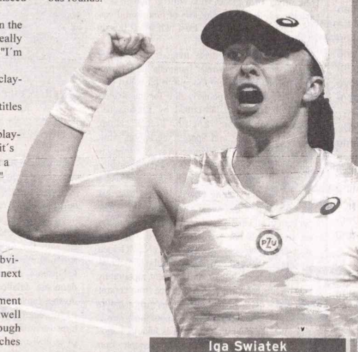
"It´s been a while since I have won four matches in a row. Lots to build on. It´s obviously great momentum going into Rome next week," she said.

"It´s obviously only my fourth tournament back after the shoulder injury, so to do so well here and to be able to play some tough matches and have some three-set matches and be physically 100% still and being able to look forward to Rome and hopefully play some good tennis there is a huge positive."

American Keys was hoping to extend her successful run in Madrid, having already notched two Top 10 wins over Coco Gauff and Ons Jabeur in the previous rounds.



Aryna Sabalenka



Iga Swiatek

Europa League semi-final:

Leverkusen earns victory at Roma

ROME (News Wires) — Goals by Florian Wirtz and Robert Andrich gave Bayer Leverkusen a 2-0 advantage over AS Roma in the first leg of their UEFA Europa League semi-final as the German champions edged closer to their first European final in 22 years.

The newly-crowned Bundesliga winners and German Cup finalists, who recently overtook Juventus to claim the European record for the longest unbeaten streak across all competitions, lost 2-1 to Real Madrid in the 2002 Champions League final. They won their only ever European title when they lifted the UEFA Cup in 1988, **Reuters** reported.

While Leverkusen had an upper hand in the opening minutes, Roma grew into the game as the first half wore on and Romelu Lukaku could have given the hosts an early lead when he hit the bar with a header following a corner in the 21st minute. However, the tables turned again in favour of Xabi Alonso's side who took the lead through Wirtz before the half-hour mark when the midfielder scored with a simple low finish, capitalising on Roma's defensive error. Roma defender Rick Karsdorp miscalculated when he attempted to find Leonardo Spinazzola with a pass from the edge of their own box and Leverkusen's Alex Grimaldo took over the ball, cutting back to Wirtz who netted into the bottom right corner.

Leverkusen could have doubled the lead six minutes later but Jeremie Frimpong narrowly missed the target, striking from around the penalty spot with first touch.

Iraq secures Paris Olympics spot

PARIS/ DOHA (News Wires) — Iraq qualified for the men's soccer tournament at the Paris Olympic Games with a 2-1 win over Indonesia in the third-place playoff at the Under-23 Asian Cup.

Ali Jasim's extra-time winner means Iraq take Asia's third automatic place at the Olympics. Japan and Uzbekistan have both already qualified for the Paris Games.

Indonesia took the lead after 19 minutes at Abdullah bin Khalifa Stadium in the meeting of the two defeated semifinalists when Ivar Jenner scored from outside the area.

Eight minutes later, Zaid Tahseen headed home at the near post to make it 1-1. The game went to extra time and Iraq took the lead in the 96th.

The Indonesian defense misjudged the bounce of a long pass allowing Jasim to run free into the right side of the area.

He sent a powerful shot across the diving goalkeeper to put Iraq on the brink of their sixth Olympic appearance.

Indonesia, still searching for a first Olympic appearance since 1956, almost took the game to a penalty shootout in the final action but Justin Hubner's header was cleared off the line.

There is still one more opportunity for Indonesia. They will face Guinea in a May 9 playoff for a place in Paris.

Elsewhere, Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo inaugurated a colossal storage basin that will help reduce the risks of pollution in the Seine as the Olympics approach and make the river suitable for bathing.



RYAN GARCIA (R) knocking down Devin Haney during a super lightweight boxing match on April 21, 2024, in New York. Garcia won the fight.

Garcia denies doping before Haney fight

NEW YORK (News Wires) — American super lightweight boxer Ryan Garcia has denied taking a banned performance-enhancing substance before his victory over WBC world champion Devin Haney in New York last month. ESPN, citing a leaked letter from the Voluntary Anti-Doping Association (VADA), reported that Garcia had tested positive for ostarine on the day before and day of the fight.

Garcia addressed the report in a video posted on X. "Everybody knows that I don't cheat," the 25-year-old said.

"Never taken a steroid. I don't even know where to get steroids at the end of the day, I barely take supplements. Big lies," he added according to **Reuters**.

Garcia floored Haney three times on the way to a majority decision at Brooklyn's Barclays Center to hand his rival the first defeat of his professional career. He missed weight so was unable to claim the title.

Ostarine is a selective androgen receptor modulator which produces similar results to anabolic steroids, allowing athletes to increase muscle mass and fitness. It is banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

VADA, an independent agency based in Las Vegas that runs testing mostly for boxing and mixed martial arts, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. "We learned about this situation not too long ago and it's unfortunate Ryan cheated and disrespected both the fans and the sport of boxing by fighting dirty and breaking positive not once, but twice," Haney said in a statement to ESPN, adding: "This puts the fight in a completely different light."

PSG's Hernandez to miss Euro

PARIS (News Wires) — Paris St Germain defender Lucas Hernandez is expected to miss Euro 2024 as he will be undergoing surgery after tearing his anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) during his club's UEFA Champions League first-leg semi-final against Borussia Dortmund.

Hernandez had to be taken off in the 42nd minute Wednesday after suffering the left knee injury during PSG's 1-0 defeat in Dortmund.

"Lucas Hernandez suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee after coming off injured during the Champions League match," the Ligue 1 club said in a statement.

"An MRI scan carried out confirmed the diagnosis made by the club's doctors.

"The player will undergo surgery in the next few days."

The 28-year-old Frenchman had also ruptured his ACL during the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, where France finished as runners-up.

Having started his career at La Liga side Atletico Madrid before moving to German giants Bayern Munich in 2019, Hernandez has been capped 37 times by France since making his debut in 2018.

"When I signed with PSG, I made a promise that I would give my heart and soul to this team and this is what I have done ever since," Hernandez posted on Instagram according to **Reuters**.

"I pushed myself back onto the field and tried to keep on fighting for our team, but it was not possible... My comeback will be stronger than ever before."

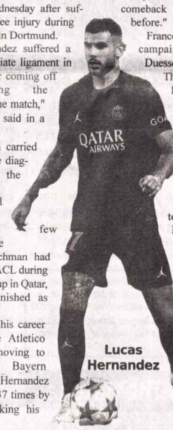
France will kick off their Euro campaign against Austria in Duesseldorf, Germany, on June 17. Their Group D also includes Poland and the Netherlands.

"Get well soon Lucas," the French national team said on social media platform X.

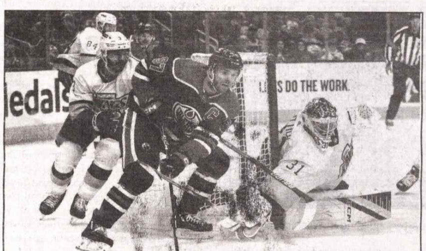
"Lucas Hernandez will be sidelined for several months."

His latest setback is a blow to France coach Didier Deschamps who will announce his squad on May 16 for the European championships which get underway in Germany on June 14.

"I have no news on Lucas Hernandez. It doesn't look very positive. But we will wait for the doctors to analyse it," PSG coach Luis Enrique said after Wednesday's match.



Lucas Hernandez



Oilers advance to playoff 2nd round

EDMONTON, Alberta (News Wires) [illegible] Leon Draisaitl scored twice [illegible] Edmonton Oilers defeated Los [illegible] Kings 4-3 in Game 5 to win [illegible] NHL playoff and advance to [illegible]

"That was a difference in [illegible] Oilers head coach Kris Kn[illegible] according to **AP**.

The Oilers power play went [illegible] the night but scored twice just [illegible] had expired on a penalty. Edmonton finished 9 for 20 with the man-advantage in the five games. Los Angeles, meanwhile, was 0 for 1 in this game, going scoreless on 12 power plays in the series.

[illegible] pretty simple to write this one," [illegible] interim head coach Jim Hiller said. [illegible] one team execute, and one team [illegible] special teams."

[illegible] Hyman -- with his seventh goal of the postseason -- and Evander Kane also scored for Edmonton, which only dropped a [illegible] in overtime of Game 2 in the best-of-seven series.

Evan Bouchard added three assists, and Connor McDavid and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins had two each as Edmonton´s offense broke out at Rogers Place. McDavid extended his points total to a playoff-leading 12 (one goal, 11 assists).

Real can clinch La Liga title

BARCELONA, Spain (News Wires) — Chasing another Champions League crown, Real Madrid already has its fingertips on the Spanish La Liga title.

The 14-time European Cup winner could clinch the Spanish league on Saturday when Madrid hosts Cadiz and Barcelona visits Girona if everything goes its way. Madrid can lock up title No. 36 with four games left in two scenarios: If Madrid beats Cadiz and Barcelona fails to beat Girona, or if Madrid draws with Cadiz and Barcelona loses at Girona.

Madrid leads Barcelona by 11 points and has the tiebreaker with Barcelona in its favour entering the round. Madrid has been the runaway favourite since it beat Girona, then its top challenger, in February and quashed a half-hearted rally by Barcelona in a Clasico victory last month.

With the domestic title apparently a question of time, Madrid´s priority is its Champions League semi-final with Bayern Munich. Madrid earned a 2-2 draw in Germany thanks to Vinicius Junior's brace on Tuesday.

Bayern comes to Madrid next Wednesday to decide who will face Paris Saint-Germain or Borussia Dortmund in the June 1 final.

Led by Jude Bellingham, Vinícius and veteran midfielder Toni Kroos, Carlo Ancelotti´s side has lost only once in 33 league games in this campaign.



REAL MADRID'S coach Carlo Ancelotti (C) gesturing next to Madrid's Jude Bellingham during the Champions League quarter-final first-leg match against Manchester City in Madrid, on April 9, 2024.

Ancelotti rotated his starting lineup for the last round where Madrid won at Real Sociedad, so it is likely that he will also rest some key players against a Cadiz side that is in danger of relegation. The team from southern Spain is in 18th place, inside the drop zone, and five points behind Celta Vigo, the last team clinging to safety.

Carlo Ancelotti made his 200th appearance as a coach in the Champions League as Real Madrid hosted Manchester City in the first leg of the competition's quarter-finals.

Woods gets special exemption to US Open

NORTH CAROLINA (News Wires) — Tiger Woods has accepted a special exemption into next month's US Open at North Carolina's Pinehurst Resort and Country Club, the USGA said.

Woods, who counts three US Open titles among his 15 major championships, most recently competed at the Masters in April where he finished last among the 60 players who made the cut at Augusta National Golf Club. "The US Open, our national championship, is a truly special event for our game and one that has helped define my career," said Woods according to **Reuters**. "I'm honored to receive this exemption and could not be more excited for the opportunity to compete in this year's US Open, especially at Pinehurst, a venue that means so much to the game."

Woods has hardly been a full-time player in recent years and dropped to 789th in the world ranking. His five-year exemption into the US Open after winning the 2019 Masters has run out. This year will mark Woods' 23rd US Open appearance, third at Pinehurst and first since the 2020 edition at Winged Foot Golf Club.

UN warns of potential slaughter in Rafah operation

GENEVA (News Wires) - An Israeli incursion in Rafah would put the lives of hundreds of thousands of Gazans at risk and be a huge blow to the humanitarian operations of the entire enclave, the UN humanitarian office said yesterday.

Israel has warned of an operation against Hamas in the southern Gazan city of Rafah, where around a million displaced people are crowded together in shelters and makeshift accommodation, having fled months of Israeli bombardments triggered by October 7 attack. "It could be a slaughter of civilians and an incredible blow to the humanitarian operation in the entire strip because it is run primarily out of Rafah," said Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the UN humanitarian office, at a Geneva press briefing.

Aid operations run from Rafah included medical clinics and food distribution points, including centres for malnourished children, he said.

A World Health Organisation (WHO) official said at the same briefing that a contingency plan for an incursion had been prepared, which included a new field hospital, but said it would not be enough to prevent a substantial rise in the death toll, according to **Reuters**.

"I want to really say that this contingency plan is a band-aid," said Rik Peeperkorn, WHO representative for the occupied Palestinian territory via video link. "It will absolutely not prevent the expected substantial additional mortality and morbidity posed by a military operation." He added that he was "extremely concerned" that any incursion would close the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt which is currently being used to import medical supplies.



PALESTINIAN children inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a house in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, Hamas said Thursday that it was sending a delegation to Egypt for further cease-fire talks, in a new sign of progress in attempts by international mediators to hammer out an agreement between Israel and the group to end the war in Gaza, according to **AP**.

After months of stop-and-start negotiations, the cease-fire efforts appear to have reached a critical stage, with Egyptian and American mediators reporting signs of compromise in recent days. But chances for the deal remain entangled with the key question of whether Israel will accept an end to the war without reaching its stated goal of destroying Hamas.

The stakes in the cease-fire negotiations were made clear in a new UN report that said if the Israel-Hamas war stops today, it will still take until 2040 to rebuild all the homes that have been destroyed by nearly seven months of Israeli bombardment and ground offensives in Gaza. It warned that the impact of the damage to the economy will set back development for generations and will only get worse with every month fighting continues.

The proposal that US and Egyptian mediators have put to Hamas — apparently with Israel's acceptance — sets out a three-stage process that would bring an immediate six-week cease-fire and partial release of Israeli hostages, but also negotiations over a "permanent calm" that includes some sort of Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, according to an Egyptian official. Hamas is seeking guarantees for a full Israeli withdrawal and complete end to the war.

Hamas officials have sent mixed signals about the proposal in recent days. But on Thursday, its supreme leader, Ismail Haniyeh, said in a statement that he had spoken to Egypt's intelligence chief and "stressed the positive spirit of the movement in studying the cease-fire proposal."

Turkish exporters seek new routes after Israel trade halt

ISTANBUL - Turkish exporters with firm orders are looking at ways to send their goods to Israel via third countries after Türkiye halted bilateral trade, four export company owners told Reuters, saying the decision had caught them by surprise.

Trade Minister Omer Bolat said yesterday that Türkiye will not resume trade with Israel, worth around $7 billion a year, until a permanent ceasefire is secured in the war in Gaza with unhindered humanitarian aid flowing to Palestinians there. Attending Bolat's press conference, the owner of a household goods exporter said the trade halt had wrongfooted them, with goods held up at customs, leaving them seeking alternative routes.

"We struggled with customs throughout the day and did not understand what the problem was. The system was closed before the ban decision was announced," he said.

The owner of a food exporter said the halt in trade also meant blocking goods destined for the Palestinian territories, which have to pass through Israeli customs.

Houthis offer education to students suspended in US protest crackdown



NEW YORK University students and faculty participating in a protest against Israel's war in Gaza at Washington Square Park.

DUBAI (News Wires) - Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi militia, which has disrupted global shipping to display its support for Palestinians in the Gaza war, is now offering a place for students suspended from US universities after staging anti-Israeli protests.

Students have rallied or set up tents at dozens of campuses in the United States in recent days to protest against Israel's war in Gaza, now in its seventh month.

Demonstrators have called on President Joe Biden, who has supported Israel's right to defend itself, to do more to stop the bloodshed in Gaza and demanded schools divest from companies that support Israel's government.

Many of the schools, including Ivy League Columbia University in New York City, have called in police to quell the protests.

"We are serious about welcoming students that have been suspended from US universities for supporting Palestinians," an official at Sanaa University, which is run by the Houthis, told Reuters. "We are fighting this battle with Palestine in every way we can."

Sanaa University had issued a statement applauding the "humanitarian" position of the students in the United States and said they could continue their studies in Yemen. "The board of the university condemns what academics and students of US and European universities are being subjected to, suppression of freedom of expression," the board of the university said in a statement, which included an email address for any students wanting to take up their offer.

The US and Britain returned the Houthi militia to a list of terrorist groups this year as their attacks on vessels in and around the Red Sea hurt global economies.

Police have arrested nearly 2,200 people during pro-Palestinian protests at college campuses across the United States in recent weeks, sometimes using riot gear, tactical vehicles and flash-bang devices to clear tent encampments and occupied buildings, AP reported. One officer accidentally discharged his gun inside a Columbia University administration building while clearing out protesters camped inside, authorities said.

No one was injured by the officer's mistake late Tuesday inside Hamilton Hall on the Columbia campus. He was trying to use the flashlight attached to his gun at the time and instead fired a single round that struck a frame on the wall.

Quake warning app demand surges in Taiwan

TAIPEI (News Wires) - Earthquake warning smartphone apps have surged in popularity in Taiwan due to high demand from people eager to get a few extra seconds to take cover after more than 1,300 aftershocks rattled the island in the past month following a large temblor.

Taiwan's east coast was struck by a 7.2 magnitude quake on April 3, killing 17 people.

The frequent aftershocks since then – including more than 200 tremors in a 24-hour period starting April 22 – have unnerved many.

While the government has an automated quake warning system, sent in the form of an text message accompanied by a loud alert sound meant to sound a few seconds before the shaking starts, it can be patchy. In the capital Taipei it did not sound before the April 3 quake, prompting criticism of the system.

That, along with the rising demand to stay more informed about forthcoming earthquakes, have helped a surge in popularity in privately-developed quake warning apps.

"What we offer is customised earthquake early warning. You get to set your own threshold," said Kuo Chen-yu, the 20-year-old co-founder of Disaster Prevention Information Platform, whose users jumped to nearly 370,000 from around 3,000 in recent weeks.

Lin Ruei, another co-founder of the app, said their app tracks fast-moving seismic waves from more than 130 seismic sensors the team installed across the island to give users early warnings. For instance, he said, the app could give users in more populated western Taiwan up to 30 seconds warning for a quake from the remote eastern coast.

"Some people might feel quite panic with just an earthquake of intensity 2, then they can download our app," said Lin, a 17-year-old student. "If you get a 10-second early warning and you move to a secure spot, maybe it would be a life-saving tool for you."



LIN RUEI, 17, co-founder of Exptech and Disaster Prevention Information Platform app (DPIP) poses for a photo while showing his app, in Taoyuan, Taiwan April 29, 2024.

Indonesia relocates 10,000 after volcano eruption

JAKARTA (News Wires) - The Indonesian government will permanently relocate almost 10,000 residents after a series of explosive eruptions of the Ruang volcano has raised concerns about the dangers of residing on the island in future, a minister said yesterday.

About 9,800 people live on Ruang Island, in the province of North Sulawesi, but in recent weeks all residents have been forced to evacuate after the mountain has continued to spew incandescent lava and columns of ash kilometres into the sky.

Authorities this week raised the alert status of the volcano to the highest level, closed the provincial airport in Manado, and also warned of a possible tsunami if parts of the mountain collapse into the surrounding waters.

Hundreds of "simple but permanent" homes would be built in the Bolaang Mongondow area to facilitate the relocations, said coordinating human development minister Muhadjir Effendy, after a cabinet meeting to discuss the volcano yesterday.

"As instructed by President Joko Widodo, we will build houses that meet disaster-standards," he said, adding that the site was located about 200 km (125 miles) from Ruang Island.

Roads and buildings on Tagulandang were blanketed in a thick layer of volcanic ash, and the roofs of some homes had collapsed, according a Reuters witness. The volcano had not erupted yesterday but Manado's Sam Ratulangi Airport remained closed until the evening due to the spread of volcanic ash.

UK Labour wins over PM's Conservatives

LONDON (News Wires) – Britain's opposition Labour Party won a parliamentary seat in northern England on Friday and control of several councils, inflicting heavy losses on the governing Conservatives to pile more pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

The thumping victory set the tone for what will be a closely watched two days of local results before a national election this year, which polling shows could put Labour leader Keir Starmer in power and end 14 years of Conservative government.

Voters cast their ballots on Thursday for more than 2,000 seats on local authorities across England and a handful of high-profile mayoral elections, including in the capital, London.

Blackpool South was the only parliamentary seat up for grabs after the Conservative lawmaker quit over a lobbying scandal.

Labour candidate Chris Webb won the Blackpool election with 10,825 votes. The Conservative candidate came in second with 3,218. The swing of 26 per cent to Labour from the 2019 result was the third biggest in post-war by-election history, polling expert John Curtice said. The defeat in Blackpool and early signs of deep losses at the council level will boost Labour's hopes for a sweeping victory over Sunak's Conservatives in the national election.

"This seismic win in Blackpool South is the most important result today," Starmer said.

"This is the one contest where voters had the chance to send a message to Rishi Sunak's Conservatives directly, and that message is an overwhelming vote for change."

The chairman of the Conservative Party said it had been "a tough night".

"Obviously not a great set of results," Richard Holden told *Times Radio*.

Sunak's Conservatives are about 20 percentage points behind Labour in most opinion polls for the national election, which Sunak has said he intends to call in the second half of the year.

The British leader had hoped his announcement on increased defence spending and the passing of his divisive plan to send illegal asylum seekers to Rwanda might win over voters, but the losses could again fuel calls for him to step down. Curtice said that, based on results so far, the Conservatives could be looking at their worst local election results for 40 years and were on course for defeat in the national election.

Labour said anger over the party's stance on Gaza, where Palestinian health authorities say more than 34,500 people have been killed in Israel's military offensive, had tempered some council results but the overall message from the polls was that people wanted change.

"This is on the eve of a general election ... The mood is that it's time for a change," said Labour's national campaign coordinator, Pat McFadden.

Although local elections do not always reflect how people will vote in a national contest, a heavy defeat could trigger renewed anger in the Conservative Party over Sunak's leadership.

The extent of that unrest could hinge on the results of two mayoral elections in which the Conservatives hope to show they can still hold ground in central and northeast England.



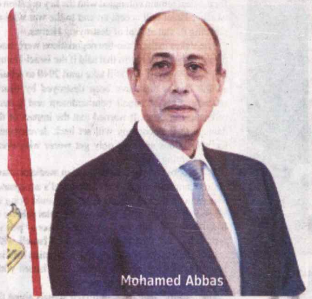
KEIR STARMER, the leader of Britain's Labour Party, spoke after the party won a Parliamentary by-election in Blackpool, Britain, on May 3, 2024.



Skywards

By Mohamed Attia

Civil aviation sector renews ground services equipment



Mohamed Abbas



THE civil aviation sector witnesses a comprehensive leap in EgyptAir and Smart Aviation's ground services equipment, aimed at providing superior services to aircraft and passengers.

Engineer Yahia Zakaria, Chairman of the Board of Directors of EgyptAir Holding Company, affirmed the company's commitment to fleet development and continuous improvement to ensure the highest quality services for passengers. He stressed the company's main goal of continuous enhancement to maintain its leading position and provide high-quality, distinguished, and secure services.

Additionally, Engineer Ibrahim Fawzi, Chairman of the Board of EgyptAir Ground Services Company, announced the addition of 37 different types of vehicles to the company, including baggage tractors, aircraft electrical management equipment, pushback tugs, and passenger buses, in line with the company's development plan.

Fawzi emphasised the importance of adhering to the highest international safety and quality standards and ensuring environmentally friendly specifications in line with the company's overhaul and development plan implemented over the past three years.

On another note, Smart Aviation celebrated the addition of the latest ground services equipment to enhance services for aircraft and passengers at Cairo International Airport and Egypt's tourist attraction airports.

The event, under the auspices of Minister Mohamed Abbas Helmy, witnessed the presence of aviation sector leaders and representatives from various agencies and private aviation companies.

During the event, a documentary film showcasing the company's activities, including ground services for aircraft and passengers, fuel supply, maintenance, and inspection services, was screened. The company's vision and goals for the upcoming phase were also presented.

Furthermore, attendees inspected the latest equipment aimed at servicing private and charter aircraft, including aircraft pushback units, ground power units, water servicing units, oxygen and nitrogen supply equipment, as well as limousines and passenger transport buses.

Pilot Azat Abdelrahman, CEO of Smart Aviation, expressed gratitude to Minister Mohamed Abbas Helmy and other ministry officials for their full support of the company, praising their efforts in developing and modernising ground service activities.

Abdelrahman highlighted the importance of developing ground service equipment at Cairo International Airport as the first phase, followed by further development stages at tourist attraction airports in Sharm El Sheikh, Hurghada, Sphinx, Alamein, and Aswan to meet the needs of clients from various countries worldwide.

It is worth noting that Smart Aviation is an Egyptian joint-stock company established in 2007, providing VIP aircraft, air ambulance, air taxi, air inspection, agency services, ground services, and maintenance services to the private aviation sector in Egypt. The company is committed to the highest safety and quality standards in accordance with local and international regulations.



Mohamed Reda appointed HR head at EgyptAir



ENGINEER Yahia Zakaria, Chairman of the Board of Directors of EgyptAir Holding Company, issued a decision to appoint Mohamed Reda Abdullah Mohamed as the Head of the Human Resources Sector at EgyptAir Holding Company, succeeding Engineer Hatem Nabil. Engineer Yahia Zakaria extended sincere thanks to Engineer Hatem Nabil for his efforts during his tenure.

Mohamed Reda previously served as the General Manager of the Technical Office and Audit Department in the Human Resources Sector.

Amani Al-Laithi appointed head of General Affairs Department



ENGINEER Yahia Zakaria, Chairman of the Board of Directors of EgyptAir Holding Company, issued a decision to appoint Amani Ali Hassan Al-Laithi to assume the responsibilities of Head of the General Affairs Department and the Affairs of the Board of Directors and the Chairman of the Board at EgyptAir Holding Company, succeeding Mohamed El Bakry, who has reached retirement age. Engineer Yahia Zakaria extended thanks to him for his efforts during his tenure.

EgyptAir celebrates Ramadan Challenge awards distribution



EGYPTAIR celebrated the distribution of awards for the Ramadan Challenge competition, launched at the beginning of last Ramadan by the Technical Support Management for Booking and Sales Systems, affiliated with EgyptAir's Commercial Affairs Sector.

Amr Adawi, Head of the Commercial Affairs Sector, presented the cash prizes to the top three winners. The Pricing Management of the Commercial Sector won first place, while the Karnak Sales Office in Qasr El Nil won second place, and the Engineers Sales Office won third place.

Sherif Abu El-Azm, Director of the Technical Support Management and Amadeus Projects Coordinator, along with his team, were honoured for their outstanding preparation and presentation of the competition.

The ceremony was attended by Ashraf Rateb, Head of the Tourism Sector (Karnak) at EgyptAir Airlines, Engineer Yasser Omran, Head of the Information Sector, Reem Aarabi, Head of Alliances Sector at EgyptAir Holding Company, Yassin Malak, Director of Amadeus Middle East, and Lamiaa Fadli, Director of Customer Management for Egypt, Lebanon, and Oman at Amadeus International.

Yassin Malak, Director of Amadeus Middle East, expressed his admiration for the competition's concept and the company's commitment to support it from day one. He also expressed his intention to implement the idea with all airlines.

UAE builds world's largest airport in Dubai

THE UAE is building the world's largest airport worth $35 billion in Dubai.

The announcement was made by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and the ruler of Dubai, regarding the approval of the designs for the Al Maktoum International Airport in Dubai, which will be the largest airport in the world.

This came in a post by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid on the "X" platform, where he stated that he approved the designs for the new passenger terminal at Al Maktoum International Airport at a cost of 128 billion dirhams ($35 billion).



Bin Rashid added that Al Maktoum International Airport will be the largest in the world with a final capacity of up to 260 million passengers annually and will be five times larger than the current Dubai International Airport. All operations of Dubai International Airport will be transferred to it in the coming years.

The airport will feature 400 aircraft gates and five parallel runways, and it will utilise new technologies for the first time in the aviation sector.



Parenting

Toddler constipation: Causes, symptoms and treatment

SEEING your little one in any sort of discomfort can be really distressing for the both of you. If toddler constipation is causing your child to feel poorly, you'll want to know how to relieve this uncomfortable feeling as soon as possible.

Firstly, the good news is that toddler constipation is fairly common, especially during the potty training phase.

What are the symptoms?

* The main sign is if they haven't done a poo at least three times in the last week
* Their poo might resemble rabbit droppings and look like small pellets
* Their poo is large and hard
* They appear to strain when doing a poo or cry
* You may see a little bleeding after they've done a poo
* Loss of appetite
* Bloating
* Stomach ache and nausea

What causes toddler constipation?

Diet - The most common culprit when it comes to constipation is often diet. If your little one is not getting enough fibre in their diet, such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables, it may make their stools harder.

Holding it in - Another very common cause is ignoring the urge to poop. We know toddlers are definitely more interested in playing than going to the loo, so they might hold their poo in for much longer than they should. They may also refuse to poo in a public loo too due to embarrassment.

Fluids - Make sure your child is drinking enough fluids as this can cause constipation. Not drinking enough fluids can sometimes result in a UTI in children too.

Fear of pain - We know that sometimes, bowel movements can feel a little uncomfortable, so it's no surprise that after experiencing a painful poop, your child might be scared to do it again due to the fear of pain. Just make sure they know that the longer they leave it, the more it's going to hurt.

Change in routine - A change in environment and routine can also cause constipation, especially when it comes to things like going on holiday and being away from their own toilet.

Exercise - We're sure your toddler will be getting plenty of exercise running you off your feet, but not enough physical activity can result in constipation

Medication - If your child ever needs to take any medication, always read the leaflet and ask your GP about the side effects as some may cause constipation.

Treatment for constipation

If you've tried changing their diet and encouraging them to try if you suspect they might need to go yet they're still struggling with constipation then you should speak to a GP.



Depending on your child's age and how long they've been struggling with constipation, they may prescribe some laxatives to help soften the stools.

In the long-term, make sure your child drinks plenty, eats plenty of fruit and vegetables, remains active and has a regular routine of sitting on the potty to try at regular intervals during the day.

To ease any anxiety around going to the toilet, make sure you stay calm and reassuring so they know that having a poo isn't something to be embarrassed about to help ease those fears.



Virtual baby and toddler classes to try with your little one

THERE are so many benefits for little ones attending classes and groups, (including the perfect excuse for parents to get out of the house) - but finding the best activity for your little one can be pretty overwhelming! With hundreds of classes out there, it can be hard to know which will suit your child best.

How do I choose the right class?

"Like all things parenting, it's really finding what works for you and your little one and choosing something that fits in with their age and stage of development," says childcare expert Fi Star-Stone. "Music and singing classes are a brilliant way to support learning. One of the biggest benefits of singing is the repeated use of the 'memory muscle'. Learning a piece of information attached to a tune, embeds that information more rapidly in a child's mind. Dancing, swimming and even little yogaclasses are fantastic for little ones physical and social development and a great way of channelling that never-ending energy. And if you really can't decide, don't worry! Many classes offer taster sessions – so it's worth trying a few before signing up for a term."

What research should I do?

"Check the class credentials – it's something that's important and something that so many parents forget,'" recommends Fi. "Many groups and classes across the UK attended by little ones, may not have adequate child safeguarding or Health and Safety and insurance.'

'The Children's Activities Association (CAA) have a Code of Practice to offer parents peace of mind and many popular UK classes including Water Babies, Baby Sensory, [diddi dance] {href='https://www.diddidance.com/' } and Tumble Tots are signed up.'

Mum Hollie admitted when looking for activities she hadn't even realised classes weren't regulated: "I assumed these kind of guidelines were in place, and in all honesty feel very ignorant now for making such a huge assumption as far as Hollie is concerned. I will now as a rule be doing my research!"

Richard Tunstall, who runs Ju Jitsu mini Ninja classes, agrees the code of practice is a huge help in helping parents find classes with peace of mind. "Any scheme which is fairly run, giving fair references on the experiences of the children and parents attending the group has to be good for all involved. Parents constantly worry about their child's well-being and therefore to know that the activities are well run and safe, should be their highest priority."